



State of New Jersey
DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY AFFAIRS
OFFICE OF SMART GROWTH
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JON S. CORZINE
Governor

SUSAN BASS LEVIN
Commissioner

EILEEN SWAN
Executive Director

February 28, 2006

RE: Update on Basic Course in Land Use Law and Planning Training Program

Dear Mayor and Municipal Clerk:

This letter serves to advise the towns of the status of the mandatory educational training program for local planning and zoning board officials in order for you to plan accordingly. On January 3, 2006, the Department proposed a rule to implement the educational training program prescribed by N.J.S.A. 40:55D-23.3 and 23.4. Public comment on the proposed rule remains open until March 4, 2006. The Department will review and thereafter, adopt a final rule, probably in June or July 2006.

Course providers cannot be approved to offer the Training Program until after adoption of the rule. Board members will then have 18 months to satisfactorily complete the Training Program. Please note that under the rule, as proposed, members completing an equivalent or more extensive course within 1 year prior to adoption of the rule, may seek a waiver from the Training Program requirement. However, the waiver is subject to approval by the Commissioner, which can only be granted after the rule is adopted.

The Department continues to work closely with NJPO and other institutions to create a meaningful curriculum, text, and instructor criteria that meet the standards set forth in the proposed rule. However, Department of Community Affairs cannot approve any waiver until the rule is officially adopted. Until then, we strongly encourage you to periodically refer to the Department's website at <http://www.state.nj.us/dca/osg/resources/education.shtml> to review the rule proposal, offer public comments pursuant to the requirements set forth in the rule proposal, and keep up to date with the Department's efforts to implement the Training Program.

We believe that while the new rule may change how towns currently approach the education of local planning and zoning board officials, the administration of a meaningful and comprehensive course approved by the Department will give your planning officials the knowledge they need to make key local decisions regarding planning. The informed participation of all local officials will no doubt have a positive impact on the quality of life for those living in and around your communities.

Please call us at (609) 292-7156 if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

Eileen Swan
Executive Director

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